

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**POLICY FOR PROVIDING FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS**  
**(DIRECT CERTIFICATION & APPLICATIONS)**

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(Date)

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(School division)

today announced its policy for providing free or reduced price meals for children served under the National School Lunch, and/or Breakfast Programs. Each school and/or central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

The household size and income criteria identified below will be used to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meal benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Children who are members of food stamp households or receive Virginia Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF); formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children - (AFDC) are automatically eligible for free meals. Foster children who are the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court also may be eligible for benefits regardless of the income of the household with whom they reside. Eligibility for the foster child is based on the child's income.

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Maximum Household Income For Free Meals</b>	<b>Household Income For Reduced Price Meals</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>\$11,167</b>	<b>\$11,167.01 - \$15,892</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$15,093</b>	<b>\$15,093.01 - \$21,479</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$19,019</b>	<b>\$19,019.01 - \$27,066</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$22,945</b>	<b>\$22,945.01 - \$32,653</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>\$26,871</b>	<b>\$26,871.01 - \$38,240</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>\$30,797</b>	<b>\$30,797.01 - \$43,827</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>\$34,723</b>	<b>\$34,723.01 - \$49,414</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>\$38,649</b>	<b>\$38,649.01 - \$55,001</b>
<b>For Each Additional Family Member - ADD</b>	<b>+\$3,926</b>	<b>+ \$5,587</b>

Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free or reduced price meals for their children. Applications also are available at the principal's office in each school. To apply for free or reduced price meals, households must fill out the application and return it to the school. Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used for determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. For school officials to determine eligibility for free or reduced price benefits, households receiving food stamps or Virginia Temporary Assistant For Needy Families (TANF) only have to list their child's name, and food stamp or TANF case number, and an adult household member must sign the application. Households who do not list a food stamp or TANF case number must list the names of all household members, the amount and source of the income received by each household member, and the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. If the

household member does not have a social security number, the household member must indicate that a social security number is not available. The application must be signed by an adult household member.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced price meal policy,

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(insert title of eligibility determining officials)

will review applications and determine eligibility. Application for free or reduced price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete documentation. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to:

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(insert name, address, and telephone of the hearing official).

Households that list a food stamp or TANF case number on the application must report when the household no longer receives these benefits. Other households approved for benefits based on income information must report increases in household income of over \$50 per month or \$600 per year and decreases in household size. Also, if a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

Households that receive food stamps or Virginia Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) do not have to complete an application for free or reduced price student meals. School officials will determine eligibility for free meals based on documentation obtained directly from the VA Department of Social Services office that a child is a member of a household currently receiving food stamps or is receiving TANF. School officials will notify households of their eligibility. The household must notify the school when they no longer receive food stamps or TANF. Households who are notified of their eligibility, but who do not want their children to receive free meals, must contact the school. Food stamp and TANF households should complete an application, if they are not notified of their eligibility within the first 10 days of the new school year.

<p>In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</p>
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